and mass-oriented consumer organisations, we will not be able to protect the interests of the consumers, especially in the new liberalised atmosphere when Government control on market is loosening. I agree that instead of Government control, control of the consumers by way of social control should be established. Then only we can protect the consumers. Now, we have taken two policy decisions. One is we are now persuading the State Governments that they should see that at least one consumer organisation is set up in one district. Second, in the recently concluded Consumer Protection Council meeting we have adopted a new perspective plan for the entire 8th Plan period. In the plan it was decided that the State Governments and the Central Government and also already well-established consumer organisations should work together to organise more consumer organisations all over the country, especially with an emphasis that more organisations are set up in rural areas.

Request For New Child Labour Policy

*263. SYED SIBTEY RAZI : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have been requested to formulate a new policy concerning Child Labour;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to take some action on these requests; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA) : (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The Task Force set up by the Central Advisory Board on Child Labour in its Report submitted in 1989 had suggested, inter alia, that the National Policy and Action Plan be redrafted to provide a comprehensive national perspective on child labour. It further suggested that the re-written document should convey and project very clearly the vision; values; commitments and concerns; spell out the funding; the approach to voluntary agencies, the strategies for education and vocationalisation of education; public civic education on child labour etc.

Government is of the view that the existing policy framework as enunciated in the document National Policy on Child Labour, 1987 is quite comprehensive and covers most of the aspects mentioned by the Task Force.

SYED SIBTEY RAZI : Children are the nation's future. If there is any deficiency felt during their childhood, it leads to permanent infirmities in some cases. Unfortunately the world over children have no constituency and they do not have any organised voice. Therefore, everyone takes them very lightly.

The Minister has replied that there is no need for a new policy relating to child labour. It has been clearly stated by the task force that the country needs a new labour policy as well as a new action plan in regard to child labour. The hon. Minister says that the present policy is quite comprehensive. I would like to know from him what exact achievements have been there through this policy during the last three years. How many convictions have been made and how many prosecutions were launched?

I would also like to know what really is being done to improve the condition of child labour in all the fields, particularly in the organised field.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir, I am afraid that the Government will not be able to claim much of credit in terms of concrete results, which the hon. Member is trying to know. The 43rd round of the National Sample Survey of India has estimated the number of child labour as 17 million. It is a huge number. So, it is not easy to tackle this problem. We have to accept this problem as a national problem and we will have to have a national movement for it. The policy which had been announced in 1987 contemplates three actions. One is legislative action i.e. implementation of the Child Labour (Policy and Regulation) Act. Under this the Member wanted to know how many prosecutions have been launched. According to the information furnished by the various State Governments so far 3,488 prosecutions have been launched against the employers for employing child labour. Second is developmental programme, which includes education, health care and other areas and also the poverty alleviation programme. It is an integrated programme which is being carried on by various departments of the State Governments and also the Central Government, because the basic problem of child labour in our country lies with the economic problem of the people. Therefore,

unless we are able to raise the economic standard of the people in general, this problem will continue. Therefore, all the rural programmes and all the poverty alleviation programmes are integrated into this.

The third programme which is contemplated by the national policy is to have project-based schemes in areas where there are concentrations of child labour. Sir, we have identified industries where concentration of child labour is found; for example, the carpet industry in Badohi, the glass industry in Ferozabad, the lock industry and so many other industries.

Under this programme we have got nine projects which are being implemented. Of course, the number of children covered is very small. It is about 6900 or so it is just nothing. But recently we have started a much more aggressive programme, in the sense we have started getting even the ILO assistance. There are two specific programmes. One programme is known as International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) where we are trying to involve all non-Governmental organisations. In all there were 74 projects. So far about 50 projects have been sanctioned.

There is another programme, again from the ILO, known as the Child Labour Action and Support Programme (CLASP). This has the main thrust for strengthening the implementation machinery for elimination of child labour and regulation of child labour.

SYED SIBTEY RAZI : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Minister says that the unfortunate manifestation of these problems is related to the poverty and economic backwardness of the people. But there is one more aspect also and that is socio-cultural perception. May I know from the Minister whether any steps have been taken by the Education Ministry for the education of these students or whether any project has been started in the backward areas? If so, I would like to know the details.

Secondly, the Minister has said that the child labour employed in this country is very large in number. This is according to the Census of 1981. May I know from the Minister whether his Ministry is contemplating to go in for a fresh census and to find out the exact scenario of child labour in the country?

Secondly....

AN HON. MEMBER : Say thirdly....

SYED SIBTEY RAZI : You are counting my number, thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN : How many questions are you asking?

SYED SIBTEY RAZI : Thirdly, there was a proposal to constitute a National Commission for Bonded Labour like the National Commission for Minorities and the National Commission for Women because every day there is some report in the newspaper that some children are being taken out of the bonded labour system from some industrialists who have been exploiting them. May I know from the Minister whether the Government will consider this proposal? If so, how much time will they take?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Mr. Chairman, Sir, in fact, imparting basic education is the most important thrust area of the various projects and various schemes that are being launched by the Government of India on its own as well as from the ILO assistance. So education is the main thrust, besides the poverty alleviation programme.

As far as a fresh survey is concerned, we do not think it is necessary because the latest survey has been done by the Registrar of Census Operations. We are awaiting the final figure from them. I do not think there is any necessity for that.

As far as setting up a Commission for Bonded Labour is concerned, there are different concepts about the child labour and the bonded labour. As far as the norms of the ILO are concerned, every child employed is a bonded labour. But our Act on Abolition of Bonded Labour doesn't define that way. We do make a distinction between a child labour and a bonded labour. We feel that these two are distinctive problems different from each other. We have to deal with these problems separately. As of today, we differ from the view expressed by the ILO. Though ILO says that every child employed is a bonded labour, for us we have made a clear distinction between these two categories of workers. We are dealing with it separately.

श्री जगन्नाथ सिंह : सभापति महोदय, मैं माननीय मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहता हूं कि वर्तमान स्थिति में 6 से 14 वर्ष की आयु सीमा के बालकों की संख्या क्या है तथा इनमें से कितने बाल श्रमिकों की संख्या है, मेरे प्रश्न के दूसरे भाग में इनमें से राज्यवार अनुसूचित जाति, जनजाति, पिछड़े वर्ग तथा अल्प-संख्यक वर्गों के बाल श्रमिकों की संख्या तथा

उनके लिए अभी तक किए गए उपायों का ब्यौरा क्या है ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir, I have already answered that. As per the 43rd round of the National Sample Survey of India, the total number of child labour between the ages of six years and fourteen years is 17 million. As far as the State-wise figures are concerned, the figures are available and I will pass them on to the hon. Member. We do not have separate figures for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRIMATI SARALA MAHESHWARI : .... 44 million and they are telling us it is 17 million. What is the correct figure ? *(Interruptions)*.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The Minister has given the answer about that already. He has already given what the correct figure is. Shrimati Kamla Sinha.

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA : Sir, I would like to know from the Minister whether throughout the world child labour has become a big issue and many European and North American and other countries have decided not to import any goods made in India through child labour. Has the Government taken cognizance of that fact ? What is the Government doing to rehabilitate child workers ? Is the Government aware of the fact that a large number of children are engaged in slate industries even in Andhra Pradesh and these goods are exported to Australia, Singapore and many other countries of the Asia-Pacific region ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir, the problem of child labour is not confined to India or developing countries alone. Child labour is a global problem, including the countries which are developed countries. Now, Sir, ... *(Interruptions)*. . . . for the benefit of the House, I would like to quote a few sentences from page 2 of the 1992 ILO report. I quote : "Child labour is not confined to developing countries, however. Millions of European children work in agricul ture and in factories. And hundreds of thousands more were in the United States, the majority among immigrant communities working on farms." *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : We are better placed than America !

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN : Sir, we cannot justify child labour on that ground. *(Interruptions)*.

श्री अजीत जोगी : क्या मंत्री जी यह कह रहे हैं कि पुरोग में है, इसलिए हिंदुस्तान में भी रहे ।

How can you justify it on that ground ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : He is not justifying it. He is giving facts. Why don't you listen to facts ?

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN : We want to know when it will be abolished; we do not want to know where there is child labour.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Child labour cannot be abolished overnight; not at all. It is not possible. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN : Sir, it is very unfortunate. *(Interruptions)*. There is no future for the children of this country. There is simply no future for the children of this country. *(Interruptions)*.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please, let us have a discussion if you are really interested. I have so many questioners here. We need a whole discussion in fact. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI : The attitude should also be positive. *(Interruptions)*.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Even children will be ashamed of the manner in which we behave. Please sit down and listen. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI M. M. JACOB : Sir, a discussion on child labour is very important. We can have a half-an-hour discussion one day.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please give notice. I am prepared to consider that.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir, I am agreeable to a discussion on this problem because as I said, it is a national problem. I share the concern of the whole House that child labour in our country is a curse on us. At the same time, we will have to understand the gravity of the situation; we will have to understand the realities on the ground and the economic condition of the people. Sir, I tell you one thing. I had gone to Ferozabad to inspect the problem of child labour in the glass industry. I had gone there. Some people were arrested on that day in my presence and thousands of children were off the work. I had hon. Members of Parliament accompanying me. What happened ? After a few days, after two, three days, a number of parents were coming to me and telling me, "Sir, because of your visit, we are starving today. We are not getting food to eat." That is the reality. We have to understand that. It is very easy to say that child labour should be abolished. Yes, I can

abolish it by introducing a Bill tomorrow. *(Interruptions)*. Therefore, Sir, I think, we must speak with a full sense of responsibility as representatives of the people. It is not a populist move that any M. P. or a Minister can say that child labour will be abolished in this country. *(Interruptions)*. As far as the ban on import is concerned .... *(Interruptions)*.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please listen to him. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN : Sir, he is talking of what responsibility we have as M. Ps. It is not correct to say what responsibility we have as M. Ps. *(Interruptions)*. The Government has a responsibility to protect the children. *(Interruptions)*.

MR. CHAIRMAN : It would be impossible for Members to ask questions if you behave like this. I would be honest. Every time, you waste time. We have only one hour before us. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI JAGMOHAN : Sir, my question relates to what is remediable. The point is, if it is in the notice of the Government that there are a large number of child beggars who are engaged by petty contractors or *dadas* around historical places and religious places and these *dadas* collect all the money which is begged by the children and they pay a petty amount to the children, is it possible for the Government to end this menace, at least for the children, which is inhuman and also exploitation of the child ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir, I could not complete the answer to Mrs. Sinha's question. As far as ban on import of goods produced by child labour is concerned, so far, there has been no official ban on that. What we are talking about is the Private Members' Bill, which is before the Senate of the United States, popularly known as "Harkin's Bill". That is what we are talking about. In fact, in America's Senate, there are two Bills—one by Mr. Harkin which seeks to ban the import of goods manufactured by children in other countries and the other is Mr. Brow's Bill which seeks to regulate child labour within the United States. So far, no Government has taken an official stand to ban the import. That is the position. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL : On this point, while it may be a fact that the Congress is still discussing it, but are you aware of the massive media campaign that is being carried on in America and an increasing number of consumers are abstaining from buying Indian carpets primarily because they are made by children. This is one dimension. Therefore, let us not take relief from the fact that the Government there has not made any law. It is making our name dirty there that Indians get carpets and other things made by children. Do you feel concerned about the Indian image also ?

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : I am very much concerned about the image of the country. In fact, I can give a series of quotations, the speeches made by important people in the ILO Conference including the Minister of Germany, which is funding the projects, the IPEC Projects, that I have said about and the speeches—I can quote, I have got with me a copy of the statement of Mr. Harkins himself who has very much appreciated the steps that are being taken by the Government towards the ultimate elimination of child labour. Ultimate elimination, we have not said in how many years we can do it. We are concerned about it and whatever steps are necessary within the country, we are taking them.

SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL : It was in 1960 .... *(Interruptions)*. ...

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have to say I have called you.

SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL : It was in 1960 that Mrs. Indira Gandhi .... *(Interruptions)*. ....

MR. CHAIRMAN : I was going to call you now. I have called you twice already.

SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL : Mrs Indira Gandhi as Chairman of the Indian Council of Child Welfare had promised the nation—and had asked, demanded from the nation because she was not Prime Minister at that time—that she would agitate for having a charter for children. Now three decades have passed since then, if not more. In the meantime two things have happened. One was, of course, child labour and there is a very dubious distinction between bonded labour and child labour because most of the labour is bonded. In addition to what Mr. Jagmohan said, would you kindly take steps that at least something is really done about the child labour in the hazardous industries and the child labour in the *dhabas*. Let us not decide, only take an excuse from the fact that we are poor and, therefore, we have to have it.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA : Sir, I can club these two questions together. I think it is more or less the same thing. As far as the hon. Member's question is concerned, we have started taking a

systematic action on tackling this big problem of child labour. I have had a number of meetings with the non-Governmental organisations. I had meetings with the trade union leaders. I had meetings with the employers of the child labour or the representatives of the industry where there is concentration of child labour. What the hon. Member has suggested is very practical. Now this problem has to be tackled systematically. What we have decided is that in States where the number of children is less, we have identified ten of them ....

SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM : Sir, is it that the Minister would go on explaining the validity of one particular item of child labour .... *(Interruptions)* .... Let him limit himself.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Sir, let him limit himself to the question put by Mr. Jagmohan.

(Interruptions)

AN HON. MEMBER : Is there any point in seeking supplementaries only on one question ?

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : I am going to the next question 264. Shri Mohinder Singh Lather .... *(Interruptions)* .... Please give a notice. There is no point in spending the whole hour on this. Please give a notice for a discussion, a half-an-hour discussion; I will agree to that.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Supplementaries are hijacked.

(Interruptions).

SHRI DAYANAND SAHAY : Sir, should we walk out from the House in protest against it ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : No, no, please.

SHRI DAYANAND SAHAY : Should we walk out from the House in protest against your discrimination ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please, you cannot say like that.... *(Interruptions)* .... Will you sit down ? Will you please sit down? .... *(Interruptions)* .... I went according to the order of notice. I went according to the order how the Members caught my eye. Q. No. 264. Shri Mohinder Singh Lather.

Losses of BCCL, Madhuban

*264. SHRI MOHINDER SINGH LATHER :†
SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA :

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. (Madhuban) and its allied colleries are running into heavy loss;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof stating the estimated day to day loss of the BCCL, and what is the reaction of Government thereon;

(c) whether Government have enquired into the causes of this loss and whether any quick remedial steps have been taken by Government to make good the losses; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof stating the measures, if any, taken by Government assuring that such losses should not occur in any public sector collieries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (d) Madhuban is an underground mine is Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. (BCCL) which is incurring losses. According to available information, approximately 84% mines in BCCL are making losses. The losses incurred by BCCL during 1991-92, before Coal Price Regulation Accrual (CPRA) amounted to Rs. 380.09 crores.

The main reasons for these losses are as follows :

(i) In Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. (BCCL) the composition of underground production of the total production is higher. Cost of underground mining per unit is generally higher than the cost of opencast mining.

(ii) The average size of the mines in BCCL is small. The size of the mine determines the economics of production, By and large, due to the presence of various geo-mining problems, even after reorganisation of some of the mines, the average size of the mines in BCCL is small.

(iii) Most of the mines in BCCL have adverse

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Mohinder Singh Lather.